

7. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH A MESSY FAIT ACCOMPLI -- AND MUST MAKE THE BEST OF THE KHALQI LEADER WITH WORST IMAGE PROBLEM -- AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, THE "RULE OF LAW" STRATEGY MIGHT BE ONE OF THE FEW TRICKS LEFT IN SAFRONCHUK'S LIMP BAG OT GIVE THIS REGIME INCREASED POPULAR ACCEPTABILITY. IT WILL BE A TOUGH ACT TO SELL HOWEVER -- ESPECIALLY IF AMIN CANNOT BE CONTROLLED BY MOSCOW AND CONTINUES TO ACT AS A BRUTAL TYRANT. AMSTUTZ

TO RUEHOC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5708
INFO RUEHJPC/AMEMBASSY JOINTING STOI
RUSSGD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9342
RUHQRA/AMEMBASSY JDDCA PACF
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1F3C
RUENGO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 193C
RUSTAC/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7431
RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3294
RUCMPT/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN C304
RUMHCA/CINCPAC
RUFKWA/USMISSION USMATO 0272
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L KASL 7063

002099

POL

CHRG
ECON
RF
CHRN

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12065: XDS-4 9/22/99 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PGOV, PINS, SHUN, AF, UR
SUBJ: (C) LOCAL SOVIET VIEWS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN'S NEW
AMIN REGIME

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: A PROMINENT LOCAL SOVIET DIPLOMAT HAS DISCLAIMED
ANY PRIOR SOVIET KNOWLEDGE OF HAFIZULLAH AMIN'S RECENT COUP.
FURTHERMORE, THE SOVIET SAW A CHANCE THAT AFGHANISTAN WOULD
NOW ENTER A POSITIVE PHASE "UNDER THE RULE OF LAW." END
SUMMARY.

3. AT A DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION ON SEPTEMBER 23, THE A/DCM HAD
AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT
KABUL WITH SOVIET COUNSELOR VASSILII SAFRONCHUK, WHO IS
REPORTED TO BE THE KEY SOVIET POLITICAL TROUBLE-SHOOTER IN
AFGHANISTAN. SAFRONCHUK MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ABOUT
THE MID-SEPTEMBER COUP OF HAFIZULLAH AMIN:

A. SOVIET EMBASSY HAD ABSOLUTELY NO FOREKNOWLEDGE ABOUT
AMIN'S MOVE AGAINST THE MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE CABINET OR
AGAINST FORMER PRESIDENT TARAKI.

B. AMIN'S HAIDEN SPEECH OF SEPTEMBER IT WAS "VERY IMPOR-
TANT" AND "SHOULD BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY." AMIN WAS GOING
TO BRING FORTH A CONSTITUTION -- "BECAUSE FOREIGN COUNTRIES
EXPECT EVERY GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD TO HAVE A CONSTITUTION."

C. AMIN HAD PROMISED THAT "HENCEFORTH, THERE WILL BE NO
ARBITRARY ARRESTS IN AFGHANISTAN." FURTHERMORE, AMIN HAS
ESTABLISHED A SPECIAL COMMISSION OF THE KAM (THE AFGHAN
SECRET POLICE) TO STUDY THE FILES OF CURRENT POLITICAL
PRISONERS AND RELEASE THOSE "BEING HELD WITHOUT CAUSE." WHEN
THE A/DCM OBSERVED THAT TARAKI AND AMIN HAVE ALWAYS TOLD
FOREIGN NEWS CORRESPONDENTS THAT "NO ONE HAS BEEN ARRESTED IN
THIS COUNTRY WITHOUT A REASON," SAFRONCHUK SMILED, AND REPLIED,
"THAT IS A MATTER OF SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENT." (COMMENT: HIS
CLEAR IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE "REASON" OF YESTERDAY MAY
NOT NECESSARILY BE THE "CAUSE" OF TODAY.)

D. THE ENTIRE PROGRAM SET FORTH BY AMIN COULD BE
RECORDED AS PLACING AFGHANISTAN "UNDER THE RULE OF LAW."

E. AMIN SHOULD BE GIVEN FAIR CHANCE TO PROVE THAT HE
MEANS WHAT HE SAYS.

4. SAFRONCHUK ALSO EXPRESSED IRITATION OVER RECENT USG STATEMENTS ABOUT SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS NORTH OF THE OXUS AND THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS AT BAFWAI AIR BASE NORTH OF KABEL. HE REGARDED SUCH STATEMENTS AS "UNHELPFUL." THE A/DCM REMINDED HIM THAT THE USG STATEMENT ALSO CONTAINED A REPETITION OF U.S. VIEWS ABOUT FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF AFGHANISTAN. SAFRONCHUK MADE NO COMMENT.

5. SAFRONCHUK ALSO COMPLAINED ABOUT THE EXCESSIVE ATTENTION HE HAD BEEN RECEIVING IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. HE SAID THAT HE DOES NOT LIKE TO BE IDENTIFIED AS "THE CHIEF SOVIET DOUBLE-SHOOTER" HERE -- AND WONDERED WHETHER THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS PUBLICITY. THE A/DCM REPLIED THAT, AS A FELLOW DIPLOMAT, HE COULD WELL UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE SAFRONCHUK'S ANNOYANCE OVER SETTING HIS NAME SO OFTEN IN PRINT -- AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY RESPECTED HIS PROFESSIONAL PRIVACY.

6. COMMENT: SAFRONCHUK ALMOST GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE, HIMSELF, HAD WRITTEN ANIN'S SEPTEMBER 17 SPEECH. HE WAS VERY FAMILIAR WITH EVERY SMALL DETAIL.

7. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH A BASSY FEAR COMPLEX -- AND MUST HAVE THE BEST OF THE AMERICANS WITH ONLY ONE FOOTING -- AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, THE "RULE OF LAW" STRATEGY MIGHT BE ONE OF THE TRICKS LEFT IN SAFRONCHUK'S LEAD AS TO GIVE THIS PEOPLE A MORE COMPARABLE ACCORDANCE. IT WILL BE A LONG ACT TO TELL THEM TO STOP BEING A CAPITAL THREAT. BUT IT